

Jer. 11:16-12:6
November 4, 1989
H. Van Dyke Parunak

A. Overview

1. Chiastic again. Once again we hear of sin and judgment, and the call to mourning.
 - a) Outer layer: emphasizes their responsibilities to God, and how they have **failed** in them.
 - 1) 11:1-15 The Covenant --> ch. 14-17 (cf. Deut. 28; Lev. 26)
 - 2) 13:15-27 Call to Repent --> royal emphasis, ch.21-23
 - b) Second layer: Object lessons describing the coming **judgment**.
 - 1) 11:16-17, Object Lesson: The Olive Tree
 - 2) 13:1-12a Object Lessons: Loincloth--ok --> ch.24? effect of going to Mesopotamia
 - 3) 13:12b-14 Object lesson: Bottle--ok --> ch.18-19, potter's
 - c) Third layer: God will **preserve** through suffering.
 - 1) 11:18-12:6 Danger to Jeremiah: interchange p --> ch. 20 and *passim*
 - 2) 12:7-17 God's Heritage--ok --> ch. 25

B. 11:16-17 Object Lesson: The Lord destroys his olive tree.

1. Structure: An augmented alternation ABABC: twice we have the Lord's favor toward Israel as his olive tree, followed by his wrath against it, and at the end the reason.
 - a) Favor:
 - 1) 17a, he is the one who planted it, and who has thus waited patiently for its produce.
 - 2) 16a, he names it "verdant, beautiful, fruitful." Understand this in the context of 17a. Like parents who record their aspirations in the name of a child, the Lord has named his tree according to his expectations for it. As in the case of the vineyard of Isa. 5, these expectations are not satisfied.
 - b) Wrath: He "speaks evil against" it, burning it and breaking its branches.
 - c) The reason, 17b: The nation's sin of idolatry. Note, "which they have done *against themselves*. In sinning against the Lord, we move ourselves from the way of blessing to the place of cursing, and thus harm ourselves.
2. Compare the image of the vine in Isa. 5 and Jer. 2:21; 5:10, where the expected fruit is not forthcoming, and so the master destroys the plantation. This sort of action is even more drastic in terms of an olive tree, which takes ten

years or more to bear fruit. Cf. Deut. 20:19,20, the Israelites were forbidden to destroy fruit-bearing trees in the course of conquering the land, because of their value. So this image is an amplification of Isa. 5 and Jer. 5:10.

3. The third clause in v.16 may lie behind Rom. 11, where Paul picks up the image of the olive tree with broken branches and shows how this judgment had the effect of bringing gentiles into the people of God.

C. 11:18-12:6 Danger to Jeremiah

Here for the first time we see a theme that becomes increasingly important as the book progresses: the personal threats to Jeremiah by the people around him because of his faithful presentation of the word of God. As he becomes aware of this danger, we eavesdrop on a conversation between him and the Lord.

Application: "All who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," 2 Tim. 3:12. If we determine to serve the Lord with all of our heart, we will suffer for it.

1. 11:18-20 Through the Lord's revelation, Jeremiah realizes his danger, and asks the Lord to avenge him.

- a) v.18, "The Lord gave me knowledge of it, that I might know it." Jeremiah was ignorant of their opposition, until the Lord showed it to him.

Application: We may be unaware of it at first, as Jeremiah was, until the Lord reveals it to us. In fact, if our attitude toward those around us is one of love, we should "bear, believe, hope, endure all things" (1 Cor. 13). An attitude of defensive suspicion toward God's people is not healthy. The Lord will show us their falseness in due time. Need to balance this with "wise as serpents, gentle as doves."

- b) v.19 and later verses show us the nature of the threat.
 - 1) 21: These are men of Anathoth, his home town (1:1). As with the Lord Jesus, "A prophet is without honor in his own country."
 - 2) 19: He was like an animal being led to slaughter, the object of conspiracy aimed at his destruction. This is not second-league persecution, but a plot against his very life.
 - 3) 21: They made a direct threat to Jeremiah: "If you won't prophesy any more, then we won't kill you." The most blatant form of bullying.
- c) v.20, he turns to the Lord for vengeance. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." Had he sought to avenge himself, he would have made his ministry without effect.

2. 11:21-23 The Lord promises to bring the requested judgment. They

had intended to destroy only Jeremiah; the Lord will wipe out not only them but their families as well.

3. 12:1-4 Jeremiah urges the Lord to bring his judgment quickly. He expresses confidence in the Lord's justice, and on that basis asks two questions.
 - a) 1a, His Confidence. He believes that the Lord is righteous, but the pressure is getting greater, and he is anxious. So he brings the two great questions that have perplexed God's people through all ages.
 - b) 1b-3, First Question: *Why* do the wicked prosper? Jeremiah makes three observations and one request.
 - 1) They seem to be the recipients of your choicest bounty.
 - 2) Yet they are superficial hypocrites.
 - 3) I, whom they oppose, serve you faithfully.
 - 4) So you should destroy them.
 - c) 4, Second Question: *How long* will this continue? Jeremiah recognizes that God's judgment against the wicked will mar the fruitfulness of the land, and asks how long this must continue. Two things to note:
 - 1) Note the ecological perspective here! He wants to preserve the animals and plants. Man was placed on the earth to rule it for God, and has no right to abuse or destroy it wantonly.
 - 2) Man's sin brings sorrow to the rest of creation. This is the case in the famine that God brought on Jeremiah's day (cf. 14:1) as a form of judgment; it is even more vivid in the result of the Fall, bringing thorns and thistles to the field (Gen. 3:18; cf. Rom. 8:20, "the creature was made subject to vanity").
4. 12:5-6 The Lord exhorts him to be ready for a lot more before it's over. Two parables about the need to be tough, followed by a warning.
 - a) His Adversaries. If foot-racers wear you out, what will happen when the horses come along? So far, you have been opposed by mere amateurs, people whose strength is comparable to your own. What will happen when you are opposed by those whose strength is greater than you own? These are simply your villagers. What happens when the king and the court turn against you, as we will see later?

Application: In fact, we can race with horses. We can survive the contest with those who seem more powerful than we, because the one who is in us is greater than he who is in the world.
 - b) His Environment. Now you trust in the land of peace, the

land of *shalom*. You are familiar with Jerusalem and Anathoth; it is a place where you are secure. The pride of Jordan is a jungle, where in earlier times lions lurked: 49:19; 50:44; Zech. 11:3. If you falter in an environment that you know well, what will you do when you are placed in a hostile one (such as Egypt, after the fall of Jerusalem)? A point that needs to be made with missionaries: if you can't do the Lord's work here in your own culture, how will you ever do it in a foreign culture?

- c) v.6 emphasizes the nature of the opposition that he faces. His own family members
 - 1) act treacherously against him. The word indicates breach of covenant, suggesting that family relations in general are a form of covenant.
 - 2) cry after him with a loud voice, as though one were pursuing a thief or a murderer. They treat him as an outlaw. Therefore, even when they speak kind words to him, he must not believe them, but recognize their true animosity.

5. Application:

- a) How to handle opposition: Commit it to the Lord.
- b) The nature of answered prayer. Jeremiah gets what he requests, but not when he requests it. God will avenge him, but he will have to suffer a bunch more first.

Hymn: Ps. 41, cf. v.9.

ANALYSIS

- A. 11:16-17 Summary illustration: The Lord destroys his own olive tree.
 - 1. 16 ZAYIT RA(:ANFN Y:P"H P:RIY-TO)AR QFRF) Y:HWFH \$:M/"K:
 - 2. L:/QOWL H:A/MW.L.FH G:DOLFH HIC.IYT)"\$(FLEYHF
 - 3. W:/RF(W. D.FLIY.OWT/FYW
 - 4. 17 WA/YHWFH C:BF)OWT HA/N.OW+"(A)OWT/FK: D.IB.ER
(FLAY/IK: RF(FH B.IG:LAL RF(AT B."YT- YI&:RF)"L W./B"YT
Y:HW.DFH):A\$ER (F&W. L/FHEM L:/HAK:(IS/"NIY L:/QA+."R
LA/B.F(AL S
- B. 11:18-12:6 Danger to Jeremiah: interchange p --> ch. 20 and *passim*
 - 1. iu (Jer): motivated speech p "Deliver me, because I now realize that I am threatened by my enemies." (chiastic with 12:1-3; Lundbom 100-101)
 - a) motivation: awareness p
 - 1) awareness f
 - a> 18 WA/YHWFH HOWDIY(A/NIY
 - b> WF/)"DF(FH
 - c>)FZ HIR:)IYTA/NIY MA(AL:L"Y/HEM
 - 2) text: ampl p
 - a> text: 19 WA/):ANIY K.:/KEBE&)AL.W.P YW.BAL LI/+ :BOWXA
 - b> ampl: quote p
 - 1> quote f: W:/LO)-YFDA(:T.IY K.IY-(FL/AY XF\$:BW. MAX:A\$FE
 - 2> quote: result p

WT

```

a: text: illustration p
  1: figure: NA$:XIYTFH ("C B.:/LAX:M/OW
  2: text: W:/NIK:R:T/EN.W. M"/)EREC XAY.IYM
b: result: W./$:M/OW LO)-YIZ.FK"R (OWD
b) quote: reason p
  1) text: 20 WA/YHWFH C:BF)OWT $OP"+ CEDEQ B.OX"N C.:LFYOWT
  WF/L"B )ER:)EH NIQ:MFT/:KF M"/HEM
  2) reason: K.IY )"LEY/KF G.IL.IYTIY )ET-RIYB/IY S
2. cu (YHWH): quote p "I will judge them."
a) quote f: summary p
  1) text: comment p
    a> text: 21 LFK"N K.OH-)FMAR Y:HWFH (AL-)AN:$"Y (:ANFTOWT
    b> comment: quote p
      1> quote f: HA/M:BAQ:$IYM )ET-NAP:$/:KF L"/)MOR
      2> quote:
        a: LO) TIN.FB") B.:/$"M Y:HWFH
        b: W:/LO) TFMW.T B.:/YFD/"NW. S
    2) summary: 22 LFK"N K.OH )FMAR Y:HWFH C:BF)OWT
b) quote: ampl p
  1) text: HIN:N/IY POQ"D (:AL"Y/HEM
  2) ampl: reason p
    a> text:
      1> HA/B.AXW.RIYM YFMUTW. BA/XEREB
      2> B.:N"Y/HEM W./B:NOWT"Y/HEM YFMUTW. B.F/RF(FB
      3> 23 W./$:)"RIYT LO) TIH:YEH L/FHEM
    b> reason: K.IY-)FBIY) RF(FH )EL-)AN:$"Y (:ANFTOWT $:NAT
    P.:QUD.FT/FM S
3. cu (Jer): quote p: "Don't delay, Lord; do it now."
a) quote f:
  1) 12:1 CAD.IYQ )AT.FH Y:HWFH K.IY )FRIYB )"L/EYKF
  2) )AK: MI$:P.F+IYM ):ADAB."R )OWT/FK:
b) quote: two questions
  1) ampl: Why do the wicked prosper?
    a> text: MAD.W.(A D.EREK: R:$F(IYM CFL"XFH
    b> ampl:
      1> their prosperity
        a: $FLW. K.FL-B.OG:Y BFGED
        b: 2 N:+A(:T./FM
        c: G.AM-$ORF$W.
        d: Y"L:KW.
        e: G.AM-(F&W. PERIY
      2> their sin: QFROWB )AT.FH B.:/PIY/HEM W:/RFXOWQ
        MI/K.IL:YOWT"Y/HEM
      3> jer's righteousness
        a: 3 W:/)AT.FH Y:HWFH Y:DA(:T./FNIY
        b: T.IR:)/"NIY
        c: W./BFXAN:T.F LIB./IY )IT./FK:
      4> imprecation
        a: HAT.IQ/"M K.:/CO)N L:/+IB:XFH
        b: W:/HAQ:D.I$/ "M L:/YOWM H:AR"GFH S
  2) ampl: How long will this continue?
    a> text: 4 (AD-MFTAY T.E):EBAL HF/)FREC W:/("&EB K.FL-HA/&.FD
      YIYBF$ M"/RF(AT YO$:B"Y-B/FH.
    b> ampl:

```

H

```

1> SFP:TFH B:H"MOWT WF/(OWP
2> K.IY )FM:RW. LO) YIR:)EH )ET-)AX:ARIYT/"NW.
4. ru (YHWH): "You'll have to endure a lot more before it's over."
a) conditional p
  1) if: seq p
    a> setting: 5 K.IY )ET-RAG:LIYM RAC:T.FH
    b> bu-n: WA/Y.AL:)W./KF
  2) then: W:/)"YK: T.:TAX:AREH )ET-HA/S.W.SIYM
b) conditional p
  1) if : W./B:/)EREC $FLOWM )AT.FH BOW+"XA
  2) then: W:/)"YK: T.A(:A&EH B.I/G:)OWN HA/Y.AR:D."N
c) 6 K.IY GAM-)AXEY/KF W./B"YT-)FBIY/KF G.AM-H"M.FH B.FG:DW.
   B/FK:
d) G.AM-H"M.FH QFR:)W. )AX:AREY/KF MFL")
e) )AL-T.A):AM"N B./FM
f) K.IY-Y:DAB.:RW. )"LEY/KF +OWBOWT S

```